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Religion on Campus: Fourth and Final Part

Religious Cults Attract Few Students

PRINCETON, N.J. — Religious cults, such as the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, are likely to make few converts on the nation's college campuses. None of the students interviewed by Gallup in the Fall of 1988 said there was a good chance that they might join such a group, and only 2% said there was "some" chance they might join one some day. While 7% rated their chances of joining as "very little," a resounding 91% of the students said there was absolutely no chance of their becoming part of a religious cult.

Nearly half of the undergraduates interviewed, however, say they have heard or read about the "New Age" movement. The term usually is used to describe an eclectic set of ethical beliefs and worship practices that some view as alternatives to Judaeo-Christian beliefs and other established religions of the world, and can embrace such disparate elements as scientology, druidism, and transcendental meditation.

Among those students who are aware of the New Age movement, 14% say they hold a favorable opinion of it. Disagreeing are 47%, while 39% of the aware group are undecided about the movement. On a base of all college undergraduates, 6% could be said to be both aware of the New Age movement, and to hold a favorable opinion of it.

Awareness of the New Age movement is highest among students attending colleges in the West (54%), but western students are the least likely to say they are impressed by the movement (8%). Awareness also is fairly high in the South (47%), but drops in the Midwest (42%) and East (36%).

Students with a 4.0 grade average are the most likely to have heard of the New Age movement (60%) and to hold a favorable opinion of it (18%). Among those with a "B" average, 44% claim awareness of the New Age movement, and 16% say they are favorably impressed. Only one student in three who has a "C" average is aware of the movement (32%)and far fewer (9%) are impressed by it.

Awareness of the New Age movement is equal for the sexes, but young women (17%) are nearly twice as likely as young men to view it favorably.

Protestant youth (49%) are somewhat more likely than Catholic students (40%) to have heard of the movement.

This is the final installment of a special survey commissioned by the Princeton Religion Research Center. The study was conducted among a representative national sample of 545 undergraduate college students. Interviews were conducted in person on the campuses of 98 colleges and universities during the period of October 17-28, 1988. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects does not exceed plus or minus 6 percentage points.

The New Age Movement on Campus

	Heard of New Age	Have favorable* view of it
Total Undergraduates	44%	14%
Gender		
Male	43	10
Female	44	17
Class		
Upperclassmen	44	13
Lowerclassemen	43	14
Grade point average		
A	60	18
B	44	16
C	32	9
Region		
East	36	14
Midwest	42	15
South	47	16
West	54	8
Protestant	49	11
Catholic	40	12

*Based on those who claim awareness of the New Age movement

Many Oppose Ordination of Homosexuals

Nearly half (47%) of all adults in 1989 think homosexual relations between consenting adults should be legal, up from only one-third (33%) who felt that way in 1987. Seven in 10 (71%) also believe homosexuals should have equal job opportunities, but when people are probed about individual occupational categories, opposition to homosexual hiring often rises.

Majorities of the public believe it is all right to hire homosexuals as salespersons (79%), members of the armed forces (60%), and physicians (56%). Less than half of the public, however, approves of hiring them for the clergy (44%), as high school teachers (47%), or as elementary school teachers (42%).

Catholics Hold More Liberal Views

In general, Catholics show more tolerance of homosexuals than is true for Protestants. On the basic question of whether homosexual relations should be legal between consenting adults, nearly half of the Catholics (47%) approve, compared to 42% of the Protestants. Three Catholics in four endorse equal job opportunities for homosexuals (76%), and more specifically, half (50%) would approve of hiring them for the clergy. A majority of Catholics approve of hiring homosexuals for all other occupations tested on the survey. Despite their usually more liberal viewpoint on these matters, Catholics (41%) are more likely than Protestants (31%) to report that their opinion of homosexuals has changed for the worse because of the AIDS epidemic.

By contrast, fewer Protestants give blanket approval to equal job opportunities for homosexuals (68%) and just 39% would consent to the ordination of gay members of the clergy. Over half of the Protestants also oppose hiring elementary school teachers (55%) and about half would object to homosexual high school teachers (49%).

These most recent findings suggest that the backlash towards homosexuals that grew out of the AIDS epidemic may be subsiding. In 1989, just over one-third of the public (36%) opposes legalization of homosexual relationship, compared to opposition by over half of the voting-age public in 1987 (55%) when the AIDS scare may have been at its peak. Although support for equal opportunity hiring of homosexuals has grown for most occupations over the years, the public has been most conservative on the matter of hiring them for the clergy. For example, between 1977 and 1989, approval of hiring homosexuals as elementary school teachers grew from 27% to 42%, but during the same period, similar approval for hiring homosexuals for the clergy rose from 36% to only 44%.

The results are bsed on telephone interviews conducted by The Gallup Organization with a randomly selected national sample of 1,227 adults, age 18 and older. Interviews were conducted during the period of October 12-15, 1989. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Facts on Religion College Students' Beliefs and Behavior

Believe in God	89%
Believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ	77
Member of a church or synagogue	67
Religious beliefs very important	55
Denominational preference:	
Protestant	49
Roman Cathoic	29
Jewish	4
Other	9
Attends religious services weekly	34
Religious commitment stronger since entering college	27
Religious commitment weaker since entering college	23
Read the Bible at least weekly	24
Describe self as born-again or evangelical Christian	23
Member of campus religious group	12
Favorably impressed by New Age movement	6
Professed agnostic or athiest	6
Some chance of joining religious cult group	2

Teens Say Clergy Are Underpaid

Members of the clergy who worry about teens who idolize rock stars and professional athletes can take some comfort in recent findings by the Gallup Youth Survey that the young people usually consider the superstars to be overpaid for what they do. And if the clergy believe they are under-rated by young people, they will find it even more reassuring to know that a slim majority (51%) consider ministers, priests, and rabbis to be underpaid. Only 9% of the country's teens say the clergy are overpaid, while 33% believe their compensation is about right.

Among teens who attend religious services regularly, 57% believe the clergy receive too little pay for their efforts. Among those not attending as often, only 43% would like to see church salaries raised. The non-attenders, however, do not argue that the clergy is paid too much (9%), but instead are more inclined than regular members to believe their compensation is just (36%).

Catholic teens (57%) are slightly more likely than Protestants (54%) to believe the clergy receive too little pay.

Majorities of teens also list their teachers (82%), factory workers (66%), and policemen (55%) as underpaid workers in our society. In addition to rock superstars (67%) and professional athletes (66%), a majority of teen-agers say U.S. Senators and Congressmen (52%) are overpaid. The teens usually consider business executives (55%), members of the armed forces (53%), and physicians (52%) receive about the right amount of pay for what they do.

The findings are based on telephone interviews with a representative national cross section of 500 teen-agers, 13 through 17, conducted from June 21 to July 9, 1989.

Opinion of Pay Levels

	Too much	About right	Not enough
	%	%	%
Rock superstars	67	28	4
Professional athletes	66	29	3
U.S. Senators and Congressmen	52	38	7
Physicians	36	52	11
Business executives	35	55	6
Clergy	9	33	51
Policemen	6	34	55
Armed forces members	3	53	38
Factory workers	3	28	66
Your teachers	3	15	82

No opinion (1 to 7 percent, nationally) omitted.

Multinational Poll Shows Young Adults In U.S. Place Greater Importance on Religion

On a recent multi-national survey, young adults in America rank first in the importance they attach to religion. Over nine in 10 young American adults, ages 18 to 24, believe religion should be important in life, including 47% who say it should be very important, and 46% who think it should be somewhat important. Only 7% of those surveyed in this country thought it should not be important.

Many young Brazilians also believe religion should be important (80%), but 20% disagree and say that it should not be very important or not at all important.

In Asia, young people from Singapore (74%) and Korea (68%) are the most likely to consider religion an important part of their lives. Only 38% of young adults in Japan share this view. In the first glimpse in many years at religious opinion in mainland China, 4% of young adults consider religion very important and 12% say it should be somewhat important in life. Rating it as unimportant were 58% of the Chinese respondents, while an unusual 20% said they held no opinion on the matter.

Religion is considered very important by 18% of Australia's young adults, and an additional 45% say it is somewhat important.

Less than half of the young adults in Europe say religion should be important in life. The young people in Sweden (45%) and France (45%) are the most likely to consider it an important aspect of life, but are joined in this opinion by only 39% of those from West Germany and 35% from the United Kingdom.

The survey was conducted by Gallup International in most countries. Approximately 1,000 interviews were conducted with young adults, 18-24, in each country. The study is part of an on-going survey entitled "The World Youth Survey" and is sponsored by the Youth Affairs Administration of the Prime Minister's Office in Japan.

Importance of Religion

The Question: *How important do you think religion should be in life — very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important?*

(Young adults, 18-24)

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
	%	%	%
Brazil	58	22	20
U. S.	47	46	7
Singapore	36	38	25
Korea	27	41	31
Australia	18	45	35
Sweden	11	34	51
West Germany	9	30	56
U.K.	8	27	61
France	8	37	52
Japan	6	32	52
China	4	12	58

THE PEOPLE'S RELIGION
American Faith in the 90's

George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli

The authors have brought together the unique resources of the surveys taken through The Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center to fully explore the faith and religious beliefs of the American people.

Survey results suggest that the laity will increasingly shape religion in the 1990s. The authors comment on other emerging trends as we enter the final decade of the twentieth century.

The People's Religion is a book that encompasses the attitudes and trends of many different religious backgrounds. In discovering what people believe, clergy and denominational leaders will find it an invaluable tool for enhancing their services. Other may use it as an indispensable research guide to zero in on a particular subject, with detailed index, table of contents, and charts, which make quick reference easy.

Published by Macmillan Publishing Company. Books may be ordered by calling the following toll-free number: **1-800-323-7445.**

Confidence in Organized Religion Far Lower in Britain than U.S.

Of the 11 institutions tested, *organized religion* rates lowest with the British public in terms of winning their confidence. Only 37% say they have a "great deal" or "some" confidence in organized religion, while half (50%) say "hardly any."

In sharp contrast, organized religion consistently ranks number one or two among Americans on the list of institutions tested, based on a comparable question. In a 1989 survey, organized religion is number two (behind the military) on a list of six institutions.

Here is the question asked in Great Britain (by the Gallup-affiliated Social Surveys, Ltd.) and the national results:

I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?

(British responses)

	Great deal	Some	Hardly any	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
Major companies	12	52	26	10
Organized religion	8	29	50	13
Civil service	8	52	31	9
Trade unions	9	34	50	7
Press	5	30	59	6
Medicine	62	32	3	3
Television	13	56	27	5
Legal system	18	50	24	8
Scientific community	20	50	14	16
Parliament	11	45	39	6
Military	25	48	19	9

Here is the U.S. question and national results, with the "great deal" and "quite a lot" categories combined:

I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Would you please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one — a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?

(Responses in U.S.)

Great deal or lot of confidence in each:	1981 %	1985 %	1986 %	1989 %
The military	50	61	63	63
The church or organized religion	64	66	57	52
U.S. Supreme Court	46	56	54	46
Public schools	42	48	49	43
Banks	46	51	49	42
Congress	29	39	41	32

Announcing . . .

Religion in America 1990

Religion In America 1990 will highlight trends in religious beliefs and practices, as well as the public's views on the impact of religion on society. Many of these indicators have become basic and standard measurements of the state of organized religion in the U.S.

The report will also present a detailed analysis of church attendance and membership by key population groups and by major faiths and denominations. Because no other organization regularly measures America's churchgoing habits, The Gallup Poll has lent its fact-finding service for this purpose.

Also included will be demographic profiles of the major faiths and denominations, as well as trends in religious preference and identification.

A special commentary by George Gallup, Jr. will explore the implications of recent surey findings for America's churches, as we move into the final decade of the 20th century.

The cost per copy is only $30.00, plus $2.00 for postage and handling. Make checks payable to Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O.Box 389, Princeton, New Jersey 08542.

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one-year subscription can be obtained for $35.00. Inquire: **Publications Department, P.O. Box 389, 100 Palmer Square, Princeton, New Jersey 08542 (Telephone 609/924-9600) PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**

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